



NATIVE WOMEN'S  
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

L'ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES  
AUTOCHTONES DU CANADA



# Storytelling: Daleen's Story



For years, communities have pointed to the high numbers of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has been honoured to work with families of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls to share the story of their loved one. As part of the storytelling process, families' are also invited to share their experiences with the justice system, media, victim services and other institutional and community supports.

Storytelling is a way of teaching and learning. The stories shared by family members are intended to raise awareness, educate, and promote change. They have been told to honour the daughters, sisters, mothers and grandmothers that have been lost to violence and remember those still missing. This is what their stories tell us.

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The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is honoured to work with families of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls to share the story of their loved one. To view all of the stories shared, or for more information this work, please visit NWAC's website at [www.nwac.ca](http://www.nwac.ca).



## Daleen Kay Bosse (Muskego)

March 25, 1979 – May 19,  
2004

*Daleen's story was written in the spring and early summer of 2008. In August 2008, she was found 10 miles north of Saskatoon, near Martensville, Saskatchewan. Daleen's family has provided an update, which appears at the end of this story.*

Daleen Kay Bosse (Muskego) was last seen on May 18, 2004, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Her family has been looking for her since, organizing search parties and awareness walks, establishing a toll-free number and financing trips across Canada to investigate tips. Her family and friends want answers; they want to know what has happened to the beautiful and outgoing woman who wants to be a teacher, who loves to make people laugh, who has a passion for drama and fine arts. They want to know what has happened to their beloved daughter, sister, mother, wife and friend.

Daleen was born on March 25, 1979, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Her parents, Herb and Pauline Muskego, were overjoyed by her arrival. Herb and Pauline would have two more children and Daleen quickly matured into a caring, devoted and protective sister to her younger brothers, Dana and David. Pauline, both of her parents and Herb's mother attended residential school and these experiences made the Muskegos absolutely determined to be good parents, to give their children a different experience than their own.

As a girl, Daleen spent time in both Saskatoon and her home community of Onion Lake Cree Nation. Her extended family was very involved in her life. They taught her Cree greetings, beadwork and how to make bannock. Daleen was particularly close to her grandmother and Herb recalls how little "Daleen sko" (meaning Daleen Woman in Cree) loved to recount every detail of their time together. As an infant, Daleen was given a Cree name in a traditional ceremony and was later dedicated in the church.

As parents, Herb and Pauline wanted their children to see as much of the world as possible. They tried to broaden their horizons, taking them to fairs, on trips to Edmonton and the mountains and bigger trips to Disneyland and Mexico. Herb and Pauline tried to include their children in everything they did. The family would often have a concession booth at powwows and Daleen would work alongside her siblings, parents and grandparents. "Broadening horizons" also meant working to give Daleen and her brothers the opportunity to try different sports and activities. As a girl Daleen was incredibly active. She took ballet lessons, swimming lessons, skating, piano, gymnastics, acting; she tried a bit of everything!

Daleen was only 13 when she got her first job working in a restaurant. She was determined to start working and although her parents did not push her to get a job they were incredibly proud to see her do so. A few years later, in grade ten, she got a job in a Lloydminster bank as part of a high school work experience initiative.

In high school, Daleen became involved in drama and speech writing. She was a very good actress and quickly developed a love for drama and the arts. She was also involved in modeling and public speaking. Daleen would later act for the Saskatoon Native Theatre in one of its very first plays, the making of which was chronicled in the 2003 documentary *Circle of Voices*. In addition to her passion for the arts, Daleen was also academically inclined, earning excellent grades. An ambitious girl, she talked about becoming a doctor or a lawyer. Her parents encouraged her to follow her dreams, telling Daleen and her brothers that they had the potential to become whatever they wanted to be. Both Pauline and Herb are teachers and Pauline believes that their work had an influence on Daleen, who would eventually decide to become a teacher as well.



Daleen's graduation picture, June, 1997

Daleen's outgoing nature brought her many close friends. People were drawn to her caring personality and her positive outlook. She had a real impact on those around her. Shortly after she disappeared, Herb and Pauline received a concerned call from Daleen's eighth grade teacher. After inquiring about her whereabouts, he commented that Daleen was "one of his all-time excellent students." And months later, at one of the many searches organized to look for Daleen, another reminder of her compassionate nature came when a young man stepped forward, saying he had come to search because Daleen had helped him with his schoolwork when they were younger.

After graduating from high school Daleen considered applying for a theatre program in Toronto, but ultimately decided to stay in Saskatoon near her friends and family. She eventually settled on a course in business administration. It was here that Daleen met her future husband, Jeremiah. After six months of dating, Jeremiah proposed to Daleen on Valentine's Day. They were married in 1999 and their daughter Faith was born two years later. At the time of her disappearance Daleen was beginning her fourth year as a student at the University of Saskatchewan where she was studying to become a teacher like her parents.

Daleen was last seen on May 18, 2004, outside a Saskatoon nightclub. She never came home. When Jeremiah woke up the next morning and realized that Daleen was missing, he immediately called the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS). An officer came to the house, asked two or three questions and left. The family characterizes the police response as being "shrugged off and brushed to the side." It was Daleen's family who made the first missing person posters, plastering them all over Saskatoon. After eight desperate days of searching, the family hired a private investigator to assist them in finding Daleen.

In the 2007 documentary, *Stolen Sisters*, Sergeant Phil Farion attempts to explain the Saskatoon Police Service's response by saying, "Because right off the bat you would say, 'Well there's no reason for my family member to leave, so it has to be criminal. Someone has taken her. It has to be.' And yet, often times it's not and sometimes people go away and come back." Daleen's family and friends are unmoved by this reasoning saying simply, but resolutely, that Daleen would never leave her daughter for so long; she would never not call.



Daleen and newborn daughter, Faith

On June 4, two weeks after Daleen went missing, a family friend spotted Daleen and Jeremiah's white Cavalier parked on a street off Central Avenue. He immediately called Jeremiah, then the police. A search revealed that the steering wheel cover, floor mats and seat covers had been removed from the vehicle and that Faith's car seat had been moved. In addition, several hundred kilometers had been put on the vehicle. To the surprise of Daleen's family and friends, police did not perform a forensic search of the vehicle. They did, however, dust the car for prints, but found none. Daleen's family, friends and the private investigator hired by the Muskegos believe that the missing items are related to Daleen's disappearance, evidence of an obvious "clean-up." The police were unconvinced, saying that the items may have been stolen from the vehicle during the three week period it sat abandoned. Investigators did not hold the car for long; it was returned to Jeremiah two or three days after it was found.

Seven months after her car was found abandoned Daleen was still missing. Her credit cards and bank account remained untouched. In January 2005, the SPS announced that Daleen's disappearance was "more serious than a missing person that doesn't want to be found." A press conference was held and police appealed to the public to help them in locating the items taken from Daleen's vehicle. Police also performed a complete forensic investigation of the vehicle, but found nothing. However, it is possible that forensic evidence *was* present at the time the car was recovered, but was lost (through wear or routine cleaning) during the seven months the car was in use. It is very difficult for Daleen's family to consider that valuable forensic evidence may have been lost due to police inaction. They are left to wonder if a more thorough investigation of the vehicle would have yielded a break in the case, a clue that might have led them to Daleen.

When asked about their relationship with the police in Saskatoon the Muskegos use words like "injustice," "anger" and "roadblocks" to describe their experiences. In the days after their daughter went missing it quickly became apparent that police believed Daleen was going to come home on her own. When Herb and Pauline filed a missing person report, police were quick to emphasize that most missing persons return home within 10 to 14 days. When weeks passed without any communication from Daleen, police replaced their initial assurances with new ones, telling Herb and Pauline that missing persons often return home for important family events like birthdays or Christmas and to wait a little longer.

Again and again the Muskegos were told to wait. When they pressed for action they were met with resistance, apathy and in some instances, patronizing excuses. Pauline recalls one particular instance in which the Sergeant responsible for the case responded to their concerns by saying that the files for missing persons in Saskatchewan were a foot high. He said, "These are the missing persons cases that are in Saskatchewan right now. And your daughter's is right here, down at the bottom." The Muskegos were told repeatedly that cases concerning missing children had priority, and while they respect this policy Herb and Pauline say *something* should have been done about their daughter's disappearance. Instead, they feel the police response amounted to saying, "Ok, she's missing, stick her there on the pile, she's just a number." Many times they tried to see the Sergeant responsible for missing persons only to be told he was not there. They came to feel as though no one was doing anything at all.



Daleen and Faith, when Faith was seven months old

Frustrated by the lack of cooperation and the unwillingness of police to accept Daleen's disappearance as a serious case, Herb and Pauline made complaints. They voiced their anger and demanded action. The police responded by citing the numerous tips they had received about Daleen's whereabouts, that she had been seen here or there and not to worry, she was going to come home. The Muskegos felt, however, that the police were attaching too much weight to the supposed sightings, sightings that were in their opinion unsubstantiated. A few weeks after she went missing police received a tip that Daleen had been seen at a bank in Saskatoon, the same bank where she had worked after graduating from the business administration program. Newspaper reports suggest that police were fairly confident about the sighting since the tip came from a woman who had worked with Daleen. Herb and Pauline regarded the sighting with caution, they wanted proof. However, when asked to see the bank's surveillance footage they were told that the cameras were down the day of the sighting. They then asked police to check Daleen's bank records as she had been seen waiting in line to access an ATM. They were told that there was no record of any transaction. In fact, the only evidence that Daleen had ever been in the bank rested with the word of woman who had not seen Daleen for years.

Daleen was supposedly seen at several other Saskatoon locations: a mall, a 7-11, a nightclub. In each instance Herb and Pauline asked to view surveillance tapes and in each instance they were told by police that it was not necessary for them to see the footage. Pauline considers the unwillingness of police to share surveillance footage one of the most frustrating roadblocks in their search for Daleen. The police wanted Herb and Pauline to accept that Daleen had disappeared willingly yet refused to provide them with any real proof that this was actually the case. And without proof Herb and Pauline say there was no choice but to continue looking. "Without proof, we'll continue to look forever until we find her," says Pauline.

When Christmas 2004 passed with no communication from Daleen, the Muskegos had had enough. They were very active in the month of January increasing not only their search efforts but also their engagement with the media. In the months after Daleen went missing, Pauline

made a point of avoiding the media. She says talking about Daleen's disappearance was too hard; she could not face being interviewed and both she and Herb worried about how their family might be portrayed. It was the coverage surrounding the death of Neil Stonechild that eventually changed their minds about the media. The attention surrounding the case, as well as statements by family members crediting certain reporters for their coverage, showed them that the media could be used as tool, a tool to raise awareness about Daleen's disappearance and assist them in their search. Since then, they have been trying to use the media as much as possible. In addition to the support they have received from family, from their community and from other organizations like the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) and Child Find Canada, the Muskegos say that their engagement with the media has led to support from other groups and individuals that otherwise might not have known about Daleen's disappearance.



Daleen and family on Faith's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday

After months of frustration and no discernable police action, the Muskegos lodged a complaint with the FSIN Special Investigations Unit. Herb and Pauline believe it was this action that prompted the SPS to finally respond seriously to Daleen's disappearance. Herb goes on to note that something curious happened after Daleen's disappearance was declared a criminal investigation. Herb called to speak to the Sergeant responsible for missing persons and was surprised to learn that he was no longer there, that he had retired. Pauline and Herb do not know if the Sergeant's seemingly abrupt exit was merely coincidental but consider the timing suggestive.

In December 2006, Chief Clive Weighill of the SPS came to Onion Lake to speak to Daleen's family and the Chief and Council about the police response to Daleen's disappearance. The family had mixed feelings about the visit. While they appreciated the gesture, Daleen is still missing and they cannot help but feel that the case would have been handled differently if Daleen was not an Aboriginal woman. Herb says, "It is not from their good will that they decided they were going to seriously look at the case. It was because of our consistency. We were at their door...My family, my community." Daleen's family continues to search, continues to pray for their daughter, for their sister, for their mother, wife and friend. For Daleen.



Daleen Kay Bosse (Muskego)

**In October 2008, Daleen’s family provided the following update:**

*August 10, 2008 – Chief Weighill, true to his word, requested a meeting in person to inform the family of new information they had received about Daleen.*

*August 11, 2008 – The accused made his first court appearance in Saskatoon. He was charged with first-degree murder and indignity to a body. Daleen’s family describes the second charge as “excruciatingly painful,” as they did not know that Daleen’s body had been burned.*

*August 12, 2008 – The accused made his second court appearance in Saskatoon.*

*And so on and so on. The preliminary hearing is scheduled to begin in April 2009.*